



IN REPLY REFER TO:

NM-114438
2800 (9320)

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

New Mexico State Office

P.O. Box 27115

Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502-0115

www.blm.gov/nm



May 23, 2013

Darling Geomatics
Attn: Mary Darling
U of A Tech Park
9040 Rita Road, Suite 2350
Tucson, AZ 85747

Dear Ms. Darling:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has received your letter dated April 16, 2013, relative to the proposed SunZia Southwest Transmission Line Project. Your letter was submitted on behalf of Cochise County, Arizona. You have requested that Cochise County be a Cooperating Agency as well as a Coordinating Agency in the preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the project.

The BLM is in the final stages of the project and is in the process of issuing a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) within the next few weeks. Although we are in the final stages of this project, the BLM will extend Cochise County an invitation to participate as a Cooperating Agency. Attached you will find a draft Cooperating Agency Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Cochise County to review and approve to participate as a cooperating agency.

With regards to your request to be a "Coordinating" agency, the BLM, in accordance with the Federal Land Policy & Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), does not provide for the creation of "coordinating agencies." Section 202 (C) (9) of FLPMA (43 U.S.C. 1712), provides that the BLM is responsible "to the extent consistent with the laws governing the administration of public lands, coordinate the land use inventory, planning, and management activities of or for such lands with the land use planning and management programs of other Federal departments and agencies of the State and local governments within which the lands are located." The FLPMA further states that the land use plans of the Secretary shall be as consistent with state and local plans to the maximum extent that the Secretary finds consistent with Federal law and purpose of the FLPMA. When addressing inconsistencies between our BLM plans and plans of state and local governmental entities, the BLM has the responsibility to ensure that our BLM land use plans are as consistent with existing officially approved and adopted resource related plans, policies, or programs of other Federal agencies, Indian Tribes, and local governments that may be affected, see 43 CFR 1610.3-1 and 1610.3-2.

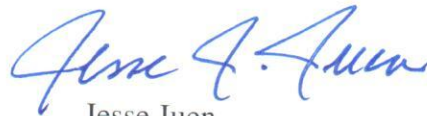
The BLM is aware of the Cochise County Comprehensive Plan, the varying alternative routes under consideration for the SunZia project do not traverse Cochise County administered lands.

Routes currently under consideration in Arizona, including those with Cochise County are either under the jurisdiction of the Arizona State Land Department (AZSLD), private ownership, or BLM jurisdiction.

The AZSLD, as a cooperating agency on the SunZia project is responsible for authorizing rights-of-ways on their respective jurisdictional lands, including those within Cochise County. We are confident that the AZSLD, as well BLM will take into consideration existing county plans prior to authorizing rights-of-way on our respective land jurisdictions.

Should you have any questions concerning the draft MOU attached, please contact BLM Project Lead Adrian Garcia at (505) 954-2199.

Sincerely,



Jesse Juen
State Director